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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4432  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 001995

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [GG](#) [GM](#) [UK](#) [FR](#) [SW](#) [OSCE](#)  
SUBJECT: TENSIONS WITH GEORGIA: NATO ALLIES PONDER  
DEMARCHE, MFA DOWNPLAYS PROBLEMS

REF: A. 08/04/09 RUBIN-RUSSELL EMAIL  
[1](#)B. 08/02/09 STATE-MOSCOW AND TBILISI EMAIL AND  
PREVIOUS  
[1](#)C. TBILISI 1427

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Eric S. Rubin for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. On August 4, NATO Quad Allies proposed a joint demarche to the GOR regarding the rising tensions with Georgia, accompanied by a similar approach to the GOG. On August 2 and 3, the MFA told us it had no information why Russian forces did not respond to Georgian attempts to contact them via the hotline August 1, or why Russia failed to attend the July 31 Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) meeting. The MFA urged that we stop pushing for access to South Ossetia by international observers, and said South Ossetia, followed by Russia, would boycott the IPRM if the OSCE did not "correct" its plan to open an office in Tbilisi. Russia urged Georgia to accept South Ossetia's proposal for border delimitation talks to avoid recent border disputes. In a non-sequitur, Rossiskaya Gazeta published an interview with DFM Karasin that possibly predated the rise in tensions, as Karasin did not address them in remarks that added nothing new. End Summary

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Quad deliberations  
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[1](#)2. (C) On August 4, NATO Quad Allies in Moscow proposed a joint Quad demarche to Acting FM Karasin or MFA IVth CIS Department Director Andrey Kelin this week to underscore the GOR's responsibility for actions, or lack thereof, of its military in Georgia, as well as for South Ossetian actions, and voice concern over the rising tensions in advance of the anniversary of the August 2008 war. The Allies suggested making a similar approach to the GOG, and informing the GOR of that step. Any approach, they counseled, should be made after obtaining their capitals' concurrence, and after the Swedish EU presidency delivers its August 3 statement regarding the tensions along the South Ossetian administrative boundary line (planned for August 4). See ref A (NOTAL) for more details.

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DFM Neverov  
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[1](#)3. (C) On August 2, 2009, Charge called Acting DFM Igor Neverov to express U.S. concerns with Russia's absence from the July 31 Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) meeting, as well as Russia's failure to answer GOG attempts to contact Russian forces August 1 via the hotline (ref B) to discuss the alleged shelling of Tskhinvali from the Nikozi

area in Georgia proper. Charge stressed the importance of non-escalation in words and rhetoric, as negatively exemplified by the Russian MOD's August 1 statement, in which the MOD compared the current events to the run-up to the August 2008 war and threatened to "use all means and resources available to protect the citizens of the republic of South Ossetia and the Russian servicemen." Neverov responded that he understood Under Secretary Burns had raised the same points with Karasin on August 2, who had agreed to stay in close contact on the issue.

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IVth CIS Deputy Director Dvinyanin  
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Russian non-engagement  
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¶4. (C) On August 3, MFA IVth CIS Deputy Director Alexei Dvinyanin told us he did not know why Russian forces did not respond to Georgian attempts at contacting them via the hotline. He implied that the call did not go through, as opposed to Russia deliberately ignoring the call. Dvinyanin said that Russia's non-participation in the July 31 IPRM meeting was not a sign of political unwillingness. Instead, the Russian side had not been reached in advance of the meeting. He underscored that Russia supported the IPRM.

EUMM  
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¶5. (C) Dvinyanin said it would be necessary to redefine the EUMM's mandate if the West wanted it to access South Ossetia and Abkhazia, given that the September 8 Sarkozy-Medvedev agreement had spoken of the "deployment of additional observers in the zones adjoining South Ossetia and Abkhazia," which excluded the breakaway regions from the mission's mandate.

¶6. (C) Dvinyanin went on to say that the West should abandon its goal of inserting international monitors into South Ossetia under current circumstances. He said the West's and Russia's positions were clear, and that reiterating them would not change anything.

OSCE office in Tbilisi  
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¶7. (C) Dvinyanin said that the Greek OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office's plans to open an office in Tbilisi threatened the IPRM, as South Ossetia had stated it would boycott the IPRM if the Greeks were to go forward with their initiative. In that case, Russia would also boycott the IPRM, as there was agreement that the meetings could only take place if all members participated. Russia would make this point to OSCE special representative Ambassador Charalambos Christopoulos when he visited Moscow August 5. Dvinyanin charged that the Greek proposal was meant to circumvent the need for OSCE Permanent Council agreement.

¶8. (C) Dvinyanin maintained that, according to the Greek initiative, the Tbilisi office was not simply to render logistical support to the OSCE IPRM representative, which was acceptable, but to provide "political functions," including establishing a permanent base for the OSCE representative and following any humanitarian projects agreed upon in the second Working Group of the Geneva talks. Dvinyanin said that South Ossetia would only agree to such an office if an equal and independent one were opened in Tskhinvali, which would similarly participate in the IPRM talks.

¶9. (C) Dvinyanin stated that Russia was "prepared to take any position that helps." When urged to persuade South Ossetia to soften its stance, he responded that Greece, not

South Ossetia, needed to "correct" its position, by either having the OSCE office in Tbilisi only provide only logistical support to the OSCE IPRM representative, or by establishing an equal and parallel office in Tskhinvali.

#### Military action

¶10. (C) Finally, Dvinyanin said that the USG should direct its concerns to the MOD regarding its August 1 statement, not the MFA. He doubted Russian forces were moving administrative border posts near Kveshi (ref C), but said that such problems could easily be remedied if Georgia were to accept South Ossetia's proposal to start border limitation talks. We responded that that would hardly be possible.

#### Karasin interview

¶11. (SBU) In the meantime, Rossiskaya Gazeta on August 4 published the transcript of an interview with DFM Karasin, likely conducted prior to the recent events. While containing the usual tough tonality and language, Karasin did not address any of the recent events. Instead, he noted Medvedev's January decree on sanctions for supplying arms to Georgia and criticized recent military maneuvers in the region. He touted the Big Treaties with Abkhazia and South Ossetia and other Russian efforts to rebuild the regions, as well as the April 30 border guard agreements. While professing Russian willingness to engage with the EUMM and support for the IPRMs, he repeated the usual accusations against the West regarding the failure to renew the UN and OSCE mission mandates.

RUBIN